U. D. C. Pamphlet No. 37a.

Pam 9

THE BETRAYAL OF THE PEOPLES

Issued by the Executive Committee of the Union of Democratic Control (with map illustrating the territorial changes involved in the Peace Treaty)

Price Threepence.

NOTE.—This pamphlet is based on the official Summary of the Draft Treaty, published on May 8th, 1919. The British Public has not, at the time this Pamphlet appears, been permitted by the Government to see the full text of the Treaty.

"The Betrayal of the Peoples."

Germany laid down her arms on the faith of certain specified terms. On October 20th, 1918, the new government of Prince Max of Baden notified President Wilson of its willingness to make peace on the basis of the terms specified in the President's speech to Congress on January 8th, 1918 (the "Fourteen Points"), and of the principles outlined therein and in subsequent addresses. The American Note of November 5th, 1918, to the German Government incorporates a statement by the Allied Governments in which they "declare their willingness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the terms of peace laid down in the President's address to Congress in January, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses." Two reservations followed, one relating to the freedom of the seas, the other—which will be referred to below—defining what was meant by restoration. The *Times* headed this Note with the words:—"The Basis of Peace: Allies accept Mr. Wilson's Points." This agreement, on the faith of which the Armistice of November 11th was signed, provides a definite standard by which the proposed terms of peace may be judged.

It was open to the Allies to reject the proposed basis. But they accepted it, and having done so they are under a moral obligation to keep their solemn pledges.

Two preliminary points must be noted before we examine the Treaty in detail. One is, that the Allied and Associated Governments are now dealing with the German people. They have always contended that their quarrel was with the rulers. "We have no quarrel with the German people," said President Wilson after the American declaration of war against Germany. "It was not upon their impulse that their Government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval." That people have now overthrown their autocratic and militarist rulers. The Emperor has abdicated, and the reigning dynasties have fallen.

Secondly, whatever the merits or demerits of the Treaty may be, it is important to realise that it has been framed in secret. Not only the enemy, but the Allied and Associated peoples, have been excluded from any part in the process of making peace; of

deciding, that is, upon the uses to which their colossal sacrifices were to be put. Even among the Allied Governments only a small inner ring has had a voice in the private conclave which drew up the Treaty. It is not one of those "open covenants of peace, openly arrived at," which President Wilson promised.

THE PROPOSED LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

The official summary deals first with the League of Nations; and those who have found in the treaty some germs of a real peace have based their hopes upon the future development of this League as an instrument of impartial justice and international co-operation. Full weight must be given to the many hopeful features of the "Covenant." Every effort must be made to realise them in practical action, and to make the League worthy of the aspirations which gave it birth. But the concrete terms of the Treaty of Peace, and the actual work which the League is called upon to do in the immediate future, must count for more than embryonic principles which may take many different forms according to the development of international relations. We must base our criticism upon the Treaty as it stands.

Moreover, the "Covenant" does not form a real part of the peace which it is proposed to make with Germany. Germany is not admitted to the League. And its constitution is such that her admission to it, on terms corresponding to her place in the world, is rendered almost impossible. The predominant power is given to America, Japan and the Western Powers of Europe; and this arrangement takes on a more sinister aspect when it is realised that all the newly arisen revolutionary or socialistic states are shut out from all participation in the League.

The real bearing of the proposal of a League of Nations on the peace settlement with Germany can only be appreciated in conjunction with the other provisions of the draft Treaty. These, as will be seen below, transfer whole populations against their will to alien forms of government, and consign the German people to a state of economic servitude. They impose upon that people a drastic and immediate process of disarmament, while their enemies are left in full enjoyment of their naval and military strength, subject to a promise that at some unspecified date the Council of the League will "formulate plans for consideration and adoption."

Now the immediate task of the League—whatever its later developments may be—is to guarantee the stability of these essentially unstable conditions. It is even required to undertake the administration of the very areas over which the bitterest controversy will arise—the storm-centres of future conflict. Such a task is one which no true League of Nations could execute; and any League which endeavoured to execute it, even with the best intentions, would find itself compelled to become a great militarist

organisation, destitute of that healing spirit of reconciliation which alone can make it an instrument of progress. It would in fact become one of the players in what President Wilson once described as "the great game, now for ever discredited, of the Balance of Power." The League does not redeem the terms; the terms degrade the League.

And there is another factor in the situation which closely affects the value of the League of Nations as at present outlined. It is not incorporated in the Peace Terms, but it virtually forms part of them. This is the defensive alliance between the United States, Great Britain, and France which President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George have undertaken to propose to their respective Parliaments. Such an alliance is inconsistent with President Wilson's principle that "there can be no leagues or alliances, or special covenants and understandings, within the general and common family of the League of Nations" (speech of September 27th, 1918). It is indeed a proof that the League is not regarded as providing a guarantee against aggression. What security can Germany expect from the League, when its own members do not trust it? Even apart from the proposed alliance, the terms of the treaty itself, with their insistence upon strategic guarantees, show that the authors of the League have no belief in it as a sufficient protection against the danger of war.

THE TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENT IN EUROPE.

President Wilson once laid it down that populations must not be handed about from one sovereignty to another "like pawns in a game." The principles expressed in his speech of July 4th, 1918, incorporated in the Agreement with Germany of November 5th, include the following:—"the settlement of every question, whether of territory or of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery." In the Fourteen Points, this principle is applied to certain specific cases. How far does the draft Treaty put it into effect?

The Plébiscites:—In two cases—the Danish districts of North Schleswig, and the portions of the province of East Prussia bordering on the new Poland—the "people immediately concerned" are to be consulted by means of a plébiscite. The arrangement in the latter case is a defective one, inasmuch as the voting is to be supervised, not by a neutral authority, but by a wholly "Allied" Commission. In two further cases consultation is to take place, but only in a strictly limited form. The people

of the Malmédy, Eupen and Morosnet districts, on the frontiers of Belgium, are to be transferred to that country; but after the sovereignty has been given to Belgium they are to have a right of "protest" within six months; the final decision being reserved to the League of Nations, on which, of course, Belgium and her allies are represented, but not Germany. Luxembourg, after Germany has renounced her treaties and conventions, is to pronounce as to its destiny; but its choice is confined to annexation by France or annexation by Belgium (see *Times*, May 8).

The Denial of Self-determination.—When we come to the more vital territorial questions dealt with in the Treaty, we find that the right of "the people immediately concerned" has gone completely by the board. This is most conspicuous in the detachment from Germany, without consulting the inhabitants, of the Saar Valley district, of Danzig, and of certain large districts incorporated in the new Poland, particularly those surrounding Lissa, Bentschen and Schneidemühl in the province of Posen, and Konitz in the province of West Prussia—districts including some 2,500,000 Germans.

In each case the population is, by common consent, overwhelmingly German. A glance at any ethnographic map, such as that contained in the *Times* Atlas, disposes of any doubt under this head.

The Saar Valley.—The people of the Saar Valley are to be forcibly severed for 15 years from the country to which they have passionately declared their allegiance. Those who are miners—the great majority—will have to work for French masters. The government is to be in the hands of a Commission appointed by the League of Nations and consisting of one Frenchman, one inhabitant of the district, and three representing countries other than France or Germany.

The territory is to form part of the French Customs system. The people are to be deprived of their electoral rights, except as regards local assemblies. At the end of 15 years they are to be consulted as to their wishes; but the French in the meantime are free to import alien workmen for the mines. There is already a proposal on foot for importing large numbers of Poles; so that the German population may well ask what security they can expect from a prospective consultation, which may take place after they have been ousted from their homes.

Danzig.—The people of Danzig, a purely German city, are similarly to be detached from their fatherland. They are to be placed against their will under a High Commissioner, appointed by a League of Nations on which their country is not represented. Their boundaries are to be determined by a Commission on which the Allied and Associated Powers have the majority. The city is to be within the Polish Customs frontiers, though with a free area

in the port. Poland is to control all its through railways, and to take charge of its foreign relations—a position of supremacy, both economic and political, which makes a serious inroad on the international character of the proposed system of government.

It will doubtless be argued that these are not technically annexations. That is what the Germans argued with regard to the arrangements made in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

The best exposure of the technical pretexts by which it is sought to veil the unquestionable fact of severance without consultation, is to be found in the words used by Mr. Lloyd George in criticising the German Chancellor's "no annexation" professions in December, 1917: "We are told that it is not the intention of the Central Powers to appropriate forcibly any occupied territories . . . It is obvious that almost any scheme of conquest and annexation could be perpetrated within the literal interpretation of such a pledge . . . Does it mean that all manner of interferences and restrictions, political and economic, incompatible with the status and dignity of a free, self-respecting people, are to be imposed?" (Speech of January 5, 1918.)

The Polish Corridor.—With regard to the German districts of Posen, West Prussia and Upper Silesia, however, the annexation is open and avowed. Its purpose is mainly strategic. It corresponds with the aims of the Polish imperialists, with whom the Allied Governments have entered into close relations. It is contrary to the aims of the Moderate parties in Poland, and especially of the Socialists. Above all, it is in conflict with the 13th of President Wilson's Fourteen Points, which clearly lays it down that the Polish State should include the territories inhabited by "indisputably Polish populations."

We rejoice over the creation of an independent Poland, and over the righting of the wrong done to that unhappy country by its partition between Prussia, Austria and Russia; but we deplore the policy which enables Poland to inflict upon her neighbours an injustice identical in character, though not in extent, with that which she formerly suffered at their hands. The old grievance, instead of being wiped out by an honest application of the principle of self-determination, is simply transferred from one side to the other. The creation of a new German "irredenta," and the severance of East Prussia from the rest of Germany, is the most poisonous gift which could possibly be bestowed upon a new State like that of Poland. Instead of being free to cope with its own internal difficulties, it will find itself committed, from the first hour of its existence, to a foreign policy complicated by strained relations with its western neighbours, and to the militarist and autocratic form of government which such relations will render necessary. A Polish State thus constituted will form a dangerous, probably the most dangerous, centre of unrest in Europe.

Memel.—A special case which requires mention at this point is that of the Memel district, East Prussia, including the mouth of the important river Niemen. Their territory is ceded to the Associated Powers, without any pretence of consulting its inhabitants. Memel and district is historically one of the oldest of Prussian centres, the refuge place of Queen Marie Louise in the Napoleonic wars.

Alsace-Lorraine.—The treatment of Alsace-Lorraine is no less a breach of the principle of self-determination. There is, indeed, little doubt that the majority of the two provinces would vote for separation from Germany. But it by no means follows that all the natural divisions into which the territory falls, if consulted separately, would register such a vote. And it is open to question whether, if they could express their opinion freely, the people would not choose some form of independent government in preference to annexation by France. If their opinion in favour of the latter were beyond question, it is hard to see why they are not allowed to express it; why special provisions are made to exclude certain classes of inhabitants from French citizenship: and why such large numbers of them are being hastily expelled. The actual wishes of the people will still remain a matter of controversy. The demand of the French Socialist Party for an honest consultation—in which they are supported by the British Labour Party in its recent Manifesto—provides the only final solution of a problem which has disturbed the peace of Europe for centuries.

German Austria.—As to German Austria, Germany is called upon to recognise its "entire independence." What this means is not yet clear. Is the right of German Austria to unite herself with Germany, if she chooses to do so, to be denied to her? Such a prohibition would be wholly inconsistent with that right of peoples to determine the State to which they shall belong—a right claimed by the Allies, with special emphasis, for the races of Austria-Hungary.

Shantung.—In a survey of the Draft Treaty, one incidental provision must be noted which, though it concerns Germany but slightly, is one of the most conspicuous violations of the right of self-determination. This is the transfer of Germany's rights in the province of Shantung, not to China, but to Japan. Japan would thus acquire virtually complete control, both economic and political, of a province which contains more than 30 millions of inhabitants, and commands the main lines of communication between Pekin and the South.

A storm of agitation has already arisen in China, and has led to the refusal of that country to sign the Peace Treaty.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL TERMS.

The economic and financial clauses of the Treaty are not merely unjust, oppressive, and in frequent violation of the Wilson

principles by which the Allies disarmed their enemy, the policy they embody is self-contradictory. For they seek at one and the same time to crush the economic productivity of Germany and to exact a huge indemnity based upon high productivity. They are best discussed by opening out this contradiction, which illustrates the fundamental incoherence and insanity of the Allied policy. On the one hand, there is the passionate desire, pre-eminently French, though shared by sections in every allied country, to keep the beaten enemy in perpetual chains, weak, impoverished, inefficient, and so incapable of gathering power for any future policy of vengeance. Associated with these punitive and preventive motives is the desire of Germany's trade competitors to maim her competition and steal her overseas markets, by devising a network of confiscation, discrimination, deprivation and interference with her internal industry and external commerce.

Hence a system of repressive measures, designed to keep her in lasting poverty and servitude. Some of these measures have political implications, but these may be ignored in this connection. The Allies propose to take away from Germany from seven to eight millions of her population, and some 35,000 square miles of her most productive soil. A large proportion of her sheep and cattle are demanded of her, including 140,000 milch-cows, at a time when her young children are dying by thousands for lack of milk. She loses three quarters of her iron and one-third of her coal mines. In addition she must export a large proportion of her thus diminished output of coal to France, Belgium and Italy for some years to come at prices fixed by the Allies. This loss of the Lorraine iron-mines, together with the coalfields of the Saar and of Silesia, and this enforced export, cuts at the roots of her reviving manufactures. Coke, benzol, tar and sulphate of ammonia, other important materials for her industries, she is required to deliver on request to France. Every facility is to be given to the Allies for transport and for trade in Germany. Not merely is Germany restricted in the raising of her customs, discrimination forbidden, most favoured treatment with free zones demanded for the Allies in German ports, but the Allies are to have power to construct new railways and to alter existing railways in Germany for their convenience. Germany may be compelled to make a Rhine-Meuse and a Rhine-Danube canal, but is prohibited from making canals connected with the Rhine for her own convenience. She is to lose her representative upon the Commission of the Danube, a great German river.

Her internal as well as her external trade is savagely assailed by the seizure of her shipping. All her big merchant ships, half her smaller ships, and a quarter of her steam trawlers and fishing boats are demanded as a contribution to the ton-for-ton policy, while she is to be prevented from replacing them by a requirement to set her shipyards to the production of 200,000 tons per annum

for the next five years, to be handed over to the Allies. Further measures are directed against the recovery of her domestic and foreign trade, by the deprivation of all her colonies and of all concessions, treaty rights or other arrangements for the conduct of foreign trade. Apart from the motive of political aggrandisement and economic exploitation which underlies all Imperialism, the most potent and reasonable argument for the German acquisition of colonies was the growing necessity of access to tropical and other overseas markets for the purchase of foods and materials and the sale of surplus manufactured goods. Unless some possessions were secured, the protectionist and discriminative fiscal policy of the great colonial powers might place fatal barriers upon her industrial development. Now every one of her colonies is taken and is handed over to her enemies and close trade competitors. In some instances, as in the case of the Colonies committed to Australia, New Zealand and Japan, they are simply to be incorporated in the tariff systems of these countries. In the case of the African Colonies, provisions are laid down in the Covenant obliging the power to which they are committed to give equality of trading rights to members of the League.

But Germany is not a member of the League and consequently is deprived of all equality of access to the possessions taken from her. The general policy of protective and discriminative tariffs practised by the other Allies, and threatened by this country, will cut off Germany from any adequate supplies of foods and materials to support a growing industrial population, deprived for some time to come of most of its former outlets for its surplus numbers.

The German Colonies.—The circumstances of this disposal of German Colonies are particularly instructive. The theory is that they are taken from Germany, not as spoils of war, not as acts of forcible annexation, but on humanitarian grounds. But no attempt has been made to fasten upon Germany responsibility for maladministration of native races exceeding that for which the Allies have been responsible in different parts of the tropical world. The great bulk of these possessions will in effect become portions of our Empire. For it is impossible to take the international control, supposed to be established by the Covenant of the League of Nations, as an effective qualification of imperial ownership, at any rate so far as economic control and lucrative commercial exploitation are concerned. This view is sufficiently warranted by the fact that in each case the Allied Power which seized and conquered a German Colony has retained possession and has been able to get itself nominated as "mandatory." Indeed, it appears that the Big Three had not even the grace to appear to consult the Council of the League.

They could not wait for this. So on the same day as the publication of the Terms, there issues from Paris an official

declaration by which the Big ones assign to themselves the colonial spoils. The theory of the Covenant is that they undertake these obligations in the interests of the Society of Nations, and for the safety and welfare of the subject peoples, not for their own selfish ends. On this we make some brief comments, which we leave in this interrogative form. Why did not the Big Three wait in order to regularise their procedure by the formal authorisation of the League? Why this undue haste to receive new onerous responsibilities? Why were German properties in West Africa put up to auction two years ago and knocked down to British bidders? Why did Belgium, Italy and Japan claim that they ought to receive mandates, upon the ground that certain German territories had been conquered by their arms?

No one conversant with the facts can fail to stigmatise the application of this mandatory principle as an impudent imposture. There is no substantial difference in fact, *or in profession*, between a protectorate such as we seized the opportunity of war to proclaim over Egypt, and the mandatory trusteeship of the League Covenant. All that the the Covenant even professes to secure is some such protection of native interests as the Berlin Congress laid down for Central Africa in 1886, without providing any more adequate supervision or enforcement. The new mandatory trustee will be the old protector, and is likely to behave as such. His own political and economic interests will take precedence over those of his ward, and the latter will have no real power of protest or redress.

Now the economic consequences of this new partition of tropical areas are very serious, not only for Germany, but also for the free economic existence and development of all countries dependent upon tropical products for their subsistence and industries. Three or four great imperial allies will have the rest of the world at their economic mercy, and will be enabled to control in various subtle ways their access to necessary supplies, while the profitable markets for goods and capital which these backward countries will present will be theirs. No general edicts issued from the League about equality of treatment will prevail over the interests of the national business groups of the mandatory power in whom the political and economic government of the area is vested. These sham mandatories will prove a source of ceaseless trouble in the world to other powers than Germany. But, of course, their first effect is to heap political insult and economic injury upon their enemy. For Germany will have lost all commercial opportunities to buy and sell in the outside world. The boycott of her goods which will be legally or privately enforced in the chief allied countries, will be reinforced by the discrimination practised in the colonial and mandatory areas of the great Allies. German merchants, banks and other business houses, have been uprooted over the greater part of the world. Quite recently all German subjects have been expelled from China in order that after the war they may not be able to resume their trade connections.

Reparation and Indemnity.—It may be urged that in spite of all these disqualifications and discriminations Germany will be able to resume her internal and a good deal of her foreign trade. So she might, if she were able to take the initial step of buying large stocks of foreign materials in order to replace her used-up resources. She might then set her factories agoing, market their products in such countries as would admit them, and so once more re-establish her economic system on some tolerable basis. But here comes the final blow. She cannot get these outside supplies without paying for them in gold or in negotiable securities, for she has no large stocks of readily exportable goods wherewith to establish credits abroad. Now she is refused permission to export either gold or securities, both being earmarked for immediate contribution to the reparation fund.

So much for the peace provisions for the economic ruin of Germany. Partly based on the desire to stop the economic and therefore the possible military revival of the enemy, partly on the desire to distribute as "spoils" her Colonial possessions and her trade, partly on the false assumption that the economic prosperity of Germany is a danger and a damage to other countries instead of an advantage, this policy aims at keeping Germany poor. But running along with it in the same document is a series of financial demands which can only be met by stimulating to the utmost the economic efficiency and productivity of this same Germany.

The provisions of the Peace Treaty are both in form and substance a violation of the definition of reparation laid down in the Note of November, 1918, proposing terms for Peace.

That definition ran as follows:—"In the conditions of Peace laid down in his address to Congress on January 8th, 1918, the President declared that invaded territories must be restored as well as evacuated and made free. The Allied Governments feel that no doubt ought to be allowed to exist as to what this provision implies. By it they understand that compensation will be paid by Germany for *all damage done to the civilian populations of the Allies, and to their property*, by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air."

Now in the Section dealing with reparation one of the categories of damages to be compensated is "Damages in the Allied peoples represented by pensions and separation allowances capitalised at the signature of this Treaty." Thus reparation is converted into indemnity for military, not civil losses. If pensions are included, with equal reason could any other portion of the war expenditure of the Allied Governments, and the Government, though bound in honour by the Note of Nov. 4, still encourages the expectation that Germany will be made to defray all our war expenditure. Though the items of the bill inserted in the treaty do not support this interpretation, they provide for a scale of payment which every intelligent politician or business man knows to be quite impossible.

Can Germany Pay?—It is perhaps conceivable that Germany could pay "in either gold, goods, ships or other specific forms of payment" the first instalment of 1,000 million pounds within the next two years. But such a payment would strip her of all means of making foreign purchases needed to set her industries agoing. It would be impossible to collect the second instalment of 2,000 millions between 1921 and 1926, unless the Allies supplied to Germany the necessary credits for making the foreign purchases they would have prevented her from making by taking her gold and foreign securities. In other words, they would have to remit the greater part of the first demand, in order to make it possible to get a portion of the second paid. But even so, it is not likely that the industrial system of Germany, broken by the alternative of repudiation and crushing taxation for the payment of her internal loans, and hampered by all the commercial and financial boycotts and discriminations we have cited, could produce any surplus wealth of the prescribed value. No economic system can work unless the labor is contented with its real wages and the investors of the capital receive the necessary interest and profit. It is only the surplus over and above such payments that can be taken in taxation. But most of the surplus will be needed to defray the internal costs of Government, and to pay interest on internal debts. Little must remain for any payment of indemnities. For, though it is suggested that reparation should precede the claims of internal creditors, this policy of repudiation would not really help to make Germany pay. It would ruin all the internal financial system of Germany, and would make it well-nigh impossible to re-establish industry and commerce on a productive footing.

Germany cannot pay the provisional sum of 5,000 millions (which Mr. Bonar Law has called "a payment on account") during the next 15 or 30 years; nor, if she could would we consent to receive it in slave-made goods dumped on our markets, or on other markets which might be ours. It is not a serious business proposition. It is political window dressing. Of this there is one crowning proof. If you really want and expect to get payment from your debtor, you give him some fixed, intelligible demand to fulfil. Now we do not do this. We first name this preposterous sum, and then inform Germany that the harder she works and the faster she pays it, the larger the next demands upon her purse will be. This indeterminate sentence destroys all incentive to produce the goods. If we had given a reparation figure of, say, 2,000 millions, involving an annual payment for interest and sinking fund of some 50 millions per annum, for 30 or 40 years (the sum which before the war represented Germany's balance upon her foreign trade), such payment would probably have met the properly assessed civil damages, which were the only demand the Paris statesmen had the right to make.

The arbitrary demand of 5,000 millions within 30 years involves an annual payment of some 350 millions, which, with her diminished internal and external resources and her damaged commerce and finance, cannot be made. But the treaty conditions, by which a Reparation Commission engages "in periodically estimating Germany's capacity to pay," and dictating her taxing system in order to extract the sums thus arbitrarily imposed, reduces the whole issue to absurdity. For it leaves no conceivable incentive to German capital and labour to go on working.

Were these reparation clauses seriously interpreted, the military occupation, a great additional expense for Germany to bear, would be indefinitely protracted and, as failure to produce the money was inevitable, would extend to other parts of Germany, which would thus be put to literal servitude under foreign military masters. Under such circumstances, the net reparation would be *nil*.

THE MEANING OF THE TREATY.

Such are the outstanding features of the so-called "terms of peace" which have issued from the six months' secret deliberations at Paris. Good forces were undoubtedly at work there, as well as bad; working in the light, the good forces might have prevailed; but the work was done in the dark, and the bad forces triumphed. It is the old lesson of secret diplomacy; the latest and the most glaring illustration of the supreme need of popular knowledge, criticism and co-operation, which the Union of Democratic Control, ever since its first pronouncement in August 1914, has invariably placed in the forefront of its policy.

One of the worst features of the Peace Terms is the treatment accorded to the German democracy. Again and again our statesmen have declared that their quarrel was not with the German people, but with their rulers. Again and again they have repeated that some evidence was required of a change in a democratic direction. That change has now come in a far more emphatic form than the statesmen, when they made these declarations, ever contemplated. Yet it has made no difference. "Germany parted with her militarism, parted with her autocracy, only to find that she was still regarded in precisely the same light as before." (*Manchester Guardian*, May 10th.) The terms could hardly have been more severe if they had been imposed upon a Germany which retained the Kaiser on his throne and submitted tamely to a government of the old type. It seems, indeed, as if the Allied and Associated Governments regarded the coming of Socialism to power in Germany as a greater danger than Prussian militarism, and had resolved to use the Peace Terms as a means of penalising a social revolution whose influence, crossing the frontiers, might threaten the existing social order in their own countries. At any rate, if the Allies

had wished to destroy the new movement in Germany they could hardly have chosen a more appropriate means than the crushing terms contained in the Treaty.

It has been the contention of the German militarist party throughout the war that the Entente would make no difference whatever between an autocratic and a democratic Germany; that the notion of a peace of reconciliation, based upon a change of system in Germany, was an illusion; and that the only choice was between complete victory on the one hand and a "crushing" peace on the other. The terms of the Peace Treaty have justified the militarists in their prophecy, and correspondingly strengthened their position.

An even more serious feature of the Treaty, however, is its open violation of the Agreement by which the Armistice was secured. It was then agreed, as has been pointed out above, that the Peace Treaty should follow the lines of the Fourteen Points of President Wilson and the principles laid down in his subsequent speeches, the basis of "restoration" being specially defined and limited by the Allied Governments. That Agreement has been treated by the statesmen who made it as a "scrap of paper." The principles of President Wilson are violated in every essential particular, while "restoration" has been extended to include a crushing indemnity. It is a breach of faith with the enemy, and as such strikes at the very foundations of that international morality of which our rulers claim to be the champions.

OUR PROTEST.

But the treaty is not merely a breach of faith with the enemy. It is a breach of faith with the Allied and Associated peoples. It is a denial of the principles for which those peoples were called upon to fight, and of the reiterated promises on the faith of which they responded to the call, and plunged themselves into the hell of modern war. They believed that they were making their colossal sacrifices in order to put an end to all war, to abolish militarism, to vindicate the sanctity of treaties, to establish justice, to give to every nation the right to determine its own destiny. They have been deceived. Their idealism was used so long as it served its purpose. It has been coldly exploited by those who never shared it. It has been prostituted to the vulgar ends of political domination and commercial rivalry.

The treaty is destitute, not merely of any gleam of generosity, but of any broad political outlook, or any apprehension of the new and revolutionary ideas which are agitating the minds of great masses of men, and shifting the very foundations of social life.

It is conceived in the spirit of the old diplomacy, whose practice at the close of every great war has been to take advantage of victory to secure the maximum of momentary advantage, military

and economic, without a thought for the deep-rooted human factors which will in time, as all history teaches, revolt against the temporary patchwork which ignores them.

The public in this country does not fully realise the consequences which will follow if the terms are carried into effect. It fails, in particular, to understand the terrible engine of destruction elaborated in the economic and financial clauses. They will drive the German people to despair. Every working-class family will be made to feel the consequence of these measures in their own persons and in the course of their daily life. They will be conscious that their labour is being exploited by foreign masters. The children now growing up will be made to pay, in actual poverty and restriction of opportunity, for the sins, not of their fathers, but of the men who controlled the destinies of their fathers, and whose policy their fathers repudiated and overthrew. For the moment the German people may be too crushed in spirit to resist any terms, however harsh. But with quieter times and reviving physical energy, there will arise a keenness of realisation and a passion of resentment which will poison the international atmosphere for generations to come.

A foundation of injustice will be laid upon which no permanent edifice can be reared, however massive the masonry, however imposing the façade. The treaty is built on sand. It cannot last. But in the process of its overthrow, the world will again be convulsed.

Wrongs such as these have often been committed in the intoxication of victory, and they may be committed now. But they are not committed with impunity. Sometimes indeed—as after the South African War—a chance is presented to the victor to atone for them in part, and to escape, by a signal and complete reversal of policy, from their fatal consequences. It is well for him if he takes that chance, and takes it at the earliest moment. If the chance does not come, or he fails to seize it, events will revolve in the old vicious circle, and his madness will be expiated at last in the blood and tears of another armed conflict.

For us who realise the nature and effects of the proposed terms of peace with Germany, there is one clear course to pursue. We must make it plain to all that for terms so conceived and framed we can accept no responsibility whatever. For us they possess no moral validity. The Governments which have made them do not speak for us and cannot bind us. We shall work unceasingly for the revision of the Treaty. We shall regard as our chief task the securing of such changes as will bring it into harmony with the ideals of the common people in all lands. Energetic action on the part of the Western democracies may secure such changes. Revolutionary

transformations, in Central Europe or elsewhere, may compel the statesmen themselves to recast their handiwork. But even if we cannot prevent the consummation of the crime with which humanity is threatened, we can at least place on record our considered protest against it, knowing that such protests provide a rallying-point for the future reconciliation of the peoples, and in the firm assurance that history will vindicate our action.

The Executive Committee of the Union of Democratic Control—

CHARLES RODEN BUXTON,
J. A. HOBSON,
F. W. PETHICK-LAWRENCE,
J. RAMSAY MACDONALD,
E. D. MOREL, (*Sec.*),
R. C. LAMBERT,
H. B. LEES SMITH,
ARTHUR PONSONBY,
ETHEL SNOWDEN,
H. M. SWANWICK,
CHARLES TREVELYAN (*Hon. Treas.*).

ORCHARD HOUSE,
2 & 4, GREAT SMITH STREET,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.

Printed by ST. CLEMENTS PRESS, Portugal Street, Kingsway, W.C.2.

Map Illustrating Peace Treaty with Germany. (Territories taken from Germany Coloured Dark).

By kind courtesy of Daily Herald.